

SCHOOL FACILITIES INITIATIVE TASK FORCE  
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2015 – 6:30 P.M.  
TOWN HALL ANNEX, COMMUNITY ROOM 1

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Ackerman, Ambroise, Beaulieu, Dauphinais, de la Cruz, Fitzgerald, Greenleaf, Heller (8:43 p.m.), Massett, Trejo  
Ex Officio: Watson, Schmidt  
Staff: Oefinger, Schneider, Kilpatrick, Bresnayan  
Consultant: Mike Zuba, Kemp Morhardt

There was no quorum present until 8:43 p.m. Up to that time, those present participated in informal discussions.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – February 12, 2015 – None.

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS – None.

IV. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

- a. Housekeeping Items – None.
- b. Elementary School Construction Alternatives

Mr. Zuba summarized the last meeting noting that the consultant was charged with overcoming the eligibility factor challenge and meeting the state's \$450 per square foot maximum for renovate to new. The Task Force asked for options for building two new elementary schools or one new school and one renovate to new.

Mr. Morhardt reviewed a prototypical PreK-5 layout with a two story component based on the educational specifications and answered questions about specific spaces. A test fit site plan on the Cutler site shows that parking and circulation take up a large area of the site, which means that the existing school would have to be demolished to finish the site. The school would support 632+ students.

Mr. Morhardt used the same cost modeling assumptions as last time. He provided an overview of Scenario 1 (\$8 million for a new middle school; \$2.5 million for a renovated Cutler; and \$5 million for a renovated West Side). Task Force members reviewed a construction schedule and cost summary with net cost to Groton (adjusted to apply the diversity school reimbursement rate to Cutler rather than West Side).

Mr. Morhardt then provided an overview of Scenario 2 with the prototype footprint school constructed on the Cutler and West Side sites (\$8 million for a new middle school; \$6 million for

a new school at Cutler; and \$6 million for a new school at West Side). Task Force members reviewed a construction schedule and cost summary with net cost to Groton (\$89,149,376 vs. \$70,431,904 for Scenario 1). Discussion followed on demolition and hazardous material abatement costs. PCBs are the unknown cost driver and require a field survey to identify. Mr. Morhardt suggested that the Town could engage a consultant to identify a budgetary number and use contingency to bridge the gap.

Mr. Morhardt provided an overview of Scenario 3 with the prototype footprint school constructed on the Cutler site, a renovated to new West Side with the diversity school rate applied, and the retention of portable classrooms at Charles Barnum and Mary Morrisson (\$8 million for a new middle school; \$6 million for a new school at Cutler; and \$5 million for a renovated West Side). In this scenario, the Town could build two new facilities simultaneously, but it would include a mid-year move. The cost summary with net cost to Groton shows \$75,300,004 vs. \$89,149,376 for Scenario 2 vs. \$70,431,904 for Scenario 1).

Discussion followed on qualifying for renovation status and the impact of the size of West Side on the eligibility factor.

The Task Force reviewed a chart comparing the scenarios.

c. Breakout Discussion

The Task Force broke out into groups for about 20 minutes to discuss strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the scenarios. Mr. Zuba tabulated the results.

TALKING POINTS

- Cost being driven by parity in facilities in the eyes of the voters.

Discussion followed on getting a handle on cost avoidance. Mr. Zuba stated he wanted to determine if the Task Force feels the group is moving in the right direction. For example, is the lack of parity enough to dismiss Scenario 3? Discussion followed on educational needs versus fiscal constraints. Mr. Zuba stated he wanted to identify what scenarios the group feels strongly about to help tailor discussions with the community.

An informal straw poll of those present indicated that Scenario 2 was the preferred option, followed by Scenario 1.

Heller arrived at 8:43 p.m. and a quorum was declared.

Discussion followed on a possible fourth scenario, which would be a new middle school and some level of improvements at Cutler and West Side. Mr. Morhardt did a quick calculation on a new middle school with \$15 million spent on each school. Because of the decreased reimbursement rate, the cost to the Town would be comparable to Scenario 1.

d. Next Steps

The Task Force cancelled the regular meeting scheduled for March 12<sup>th</sup> and scheduled a special meeting for March 26<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m.

Discussion followed on a proposal by Heller to do only the elementary schools.

e. Communication Plan – Not discussed.

V. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Heller, seconded by Ackerman, to adjourn the meeting at 9:13 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.